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L. WEEKS

STAN LEE

PRESENTS

AN ADVENTURE OF THE CAJON X-MAN

the BENEFACTRESS

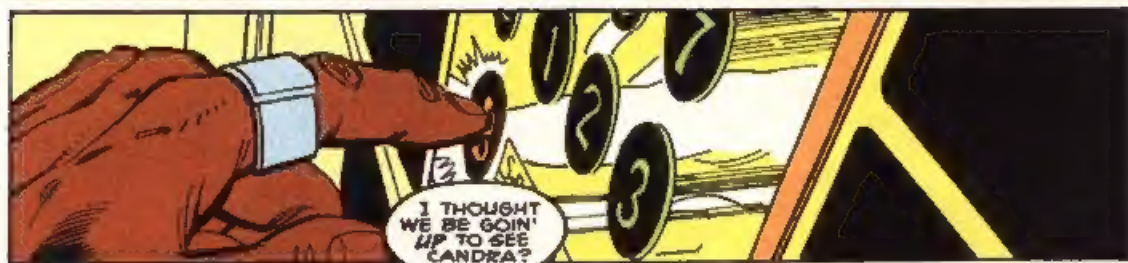
STORY/ART

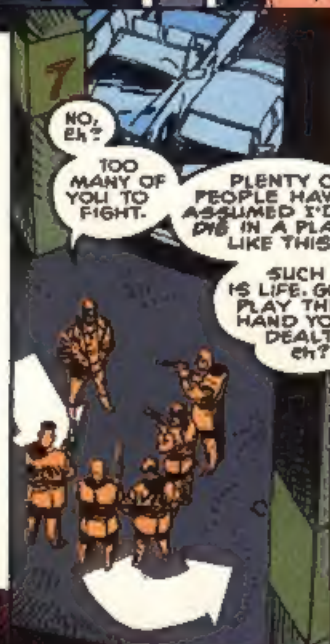
HOWARD
MACKIELEE
WEEKSKLAUS
JANSONTHE CLUB
PETITS
CHOM...NO MORE
EXCLUSIVE
CLUB EXISTS
IN PARIS...... OR ANYWHERE
ELSE ON EARTH.THE WEALTHY AND POWERFUL
HAVE AN OPEN INVITATION TO
PARTAKE IN A VARIETY OF
DIVERSIONS BEHIND THE
CLOSED DOORS OF
THE CLUB.NOT EVERY ACTIVITY WOULD
BE CONSIDERED RESPECTABLE,
OR EVEN LEGAL,
BUT...... WHEN, AT ANY
GIVEN TIME, THERE
ARE AMBASSADORS
PRESENT FROM FIVE
DIFFERENT
NATIONS...WITHIN AN
ESTABLISH-
MENT SUCH
AS THIS, THE MUTANT THIEF
KNOWN AS GAMBIT MOVES
WITH TOTAL CONFIDENCE...... PARISIAN AUTHORITIES
ARE MORE THAN HAPPY
TO TURN A BLIND EYE.<WHERE
CAN I FIND
CANDRA,
DEALER?><MANY
PARDONS, SIR, BUT
I AM NOT ACQUAINTED
WITH SUCH A PERSON...
WOULD YOU CARE TO
SIT IN ON
THE NEXT
HAND?>

NO.

GAMBIT
CREATED BY
CHRIS
CLAREMONT
& JIM LEE# TRANSLATED
FROM THE
FRENCH. - B.H.COLORIST STEVE
BUCELLATOLETTERER RICHARD
STARKINGSEDITOR BOB
HARRASCHIEF TOM
DEFALCO







NO, EH?

TOO MANY OF YOU TO FIGHT.

PLENTY O' PEOPLE HAVE ASSUMED I'D DIE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.

SUCH IS LIFE. GOTTA PLAY THE HAND YOU'RE DEALT, EH?



MAYBE A LAST SMOKE, MY FRIEND? AND SOMETHING TO LIGHT IT WITH?

OH, BUT PLEASE BE QUICK.



THANKS. I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY.



NICE.

BOLD. HEH? EXPENSIVE, AND...

"IT TAKES A CHARGE REAL GOOD."

BOOM



I'LL BE
THANKIN' YOU
FOR YOUR
KINDNESS IN
CONFIRMIN' THAT
I HAD THE RIGHT
PLACE.

THANKS
TOO FOR THE SMOKE,
BUT
LOOK
HERE..

...I ALREADY
HAD ME A
LIGHT.



TIME I
GO VISITIN'
THIS CANDRA.
SHE HAS
SOMETHIN' I WANT.

BUT FIRST--
TIME T'CHANGE
INTO MY
WORKIN' CLOTHES.

I'LL BE SLIPPIN' IN AND OUT OF THIS HERE PLACE 'FORE ANY ALARM HAS SOUNDED.

THIS IS WHAT I DO BEST..

...BEING A THIEF IN THE NIGHT.



USUALLY I BE GOIN' FOR THE CASH, JEWELS, OR MAYBE SOME OTHER VALUABLE TRASH.

BUT TONIGHT THE PRIZE I SEEK GOES WAY BEYOND MONETARY VALUE.



THE ELIXIR OF LIFE THIS HERE CANDRA HAS BEEN GIVIN' THE THIEVES GUILD ALL THESE YEARS.

THE THIEVES, MY FAMILY, WON'T HELP ME WITH GETTIN' SOME.

SO NOW, I COME TO THE SOURCE.

I DO THIS FOR YOU, BELLA DONNA. ONCE MY WIFE...

... BACK IN THE BIG EASY YOU BE ON THE BRINK OF DEATH.

I WON'T ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN. NOT WHILE I CAN STEAL BACK A CHANCE FOR YOU TO LIVE.

ONCE A THIEF, ALWAYS A THIEF.



HEH? TITHE COLLECTOR?

YES, GAMBIT OF THE THIEVES' GUILD...



...CANDRA...



... WILL SEE YOU NOW.



AS GAMBIT SLIPS INTO A WARM, DEEP, DARKNESS, HIS FINAL THOUGHTS TURN BACK TOWARD NEW ORLEANS...



I 'MEMBER WHEN HE FIRST BE SPARKIN' THIS LITTLE FLOWER HERE. HE COME TO ME AND SAY,

"TANTE MATTIE, YOU BE HAVIN' A LOVE POTION I CAN USE?"

I TELL HIM, "BOY, I'M A HEALER, NOW YOU GO WIN BELLA DONNA OVER PROPER LIKE!"

Y'ALL A DOCTOR, THEN?

I'M A HEALER, GIRL! MUCH BETTER THAN ANYONE TRAINED IN THEM FANCY MEDICAL SCHOOLS.

I'VE GOT THE EYE AND THE TOUCH, ROGUE!

...TO HIS GARDEN DISTRICT HOME, WHERE HIS FELLOW X-MAN, ROGUE, AWAITS HIS RETURN...

...AND FEARS, IN SPITE OF HERSELF, WHAT THAT RETURN WILL BRING.

THAT REMY WAS ALWAYS A SCAMP AND A HEART STEALER, BUT HE GOT A HEART OF GOLD HIMSELF!



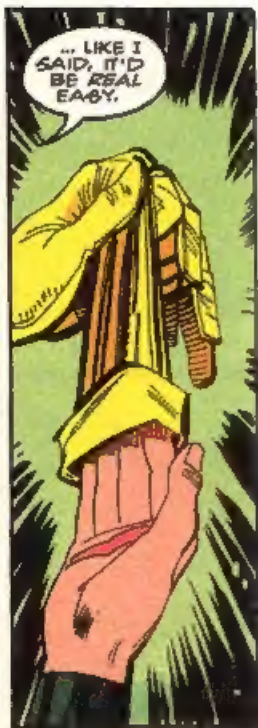
AND IT DON'T BE TAKIN' NO SPECIAL POWERS TO SEE YOU LOVE REMY, DON'T YOU?

AND HERE YOU ARE, WATCHIN' OVER HIS WIFE.

YOU POOR THING.

REMEMBER, CHILD, THE GOOD LORD DON'T GIVE US A BIGGER BURDEN THAN WE CAN CARRY.







BUT I'VE GOT WORK TO BE DOIN'...

...AND AS LONG AS THEY WERE NICE ENOUGH TO LEAVE ME ALONE...

...I'LL BE DOIN' IT.



NO, THIEF...



...DO NOT GET UP SO CAVALIERLY!

I SUFFERED A GREAT INDIGNITY AT THE HANDS OF YOUR KIND IN NEW ORLEANS LAST NIGHT. TIME FOR YOU TO SETTLE THE DEBT OF YOUR GUILD.



DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT, MON AM!

AM! DON'T REALLY CARE.

WITH SHOCKING SPEED, GAMBIT UTILIZES HIS MUTANT POWER TO TAP INTO THE POTENTIAL ENERGY OF AN OBJECT AND TRANSMUTE IT INTO INTER-KINETIC ENERGY.

THE EFFECT ON THE CHARGED-UP PICTURE FRAME IS...



...AS USUAL...

FWAK OOM

...DRAMATIC!

IF YOU WANT TO CONTINUE THIS LITTLE DANCE, WE GONNA DO IT ON EVEN TERMS, MONSIEUR COLLECTOR...

... AND AFTER 2 KICK YOUR TAIL, YOU'LL BE TAKEN ME TO THE BLAIR.

NO, MUTANT, IT'S TIME YOU LEARN THE LESSON OF YOUR ANCESTORS!

LEARN OF THE PAIN RECEIVED AT THE HANDS OF THE TITING COLLECTOR!

ENOUGH!

WHA...!

YOU KNOW I HAVE NEED OF THIS CREATURE ALIVE..

... FOR NOW.

NO.
YOU?!

YOU'RE CANDRA--
THE BENE-
FACTRESS
?!

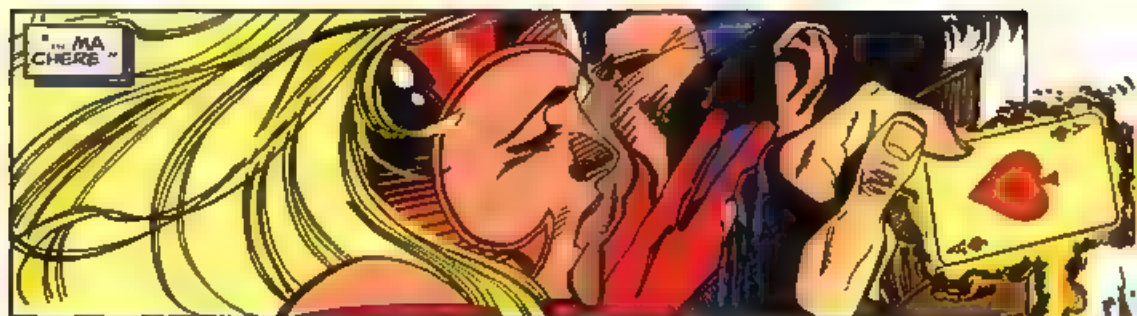
IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE YOU LEFT PARIS, REAMY

BACK THEN, NEITHER OF US EVER REALLY HAD MUCH USE FOR NAMES, DID WE?

NO, INDEED, CHERIE/NAMES WERE THE LAST THING WE EX-
CHANGED.

IT WAS A TIME.

TOO TRUE..



"...MA
CHERE..."



NEW
ORLEANS...

HER HANDS ARE
CAPABLE OF
CRUSHING MARBLE,
BENDING FORGED
STEEL.

WHY THEN DOES SHE
TREMBLE AT THE VERY
THOUGHT OF TOUCHING
THE PORCELAIN LIKE
SKIN OF THE SLEEPING
WOMAN...?

COMING
CLOSER,
SHE
TURNS
COLD WITH
FEAR

FOR SHE
KNOWS --
IN HER
HEART AND
IN HER
SOUL --
THAT WHAT
SHE WANTS,
SHE HAS
NO RIGHT
TO HAVE



NO!

LORD
WHAT WAS
I THINKING
?



HOW SELFISH
COULD I BE? TO
EVEN THINK OF
ABSORBING HER MEMO-
RIES...

IN HER
CONDITION,
THERE'S NO
TELLIN' WHAT
IT'D DO
TO HER:

I'M
SORRY,
BELLE.
I'LL
NEVER--

BUT ROGUE'S WORDS
ARE SUDDENLY CUT
OFF AS BELLA DONNA
REACHES OUT IN AN
INVOLUNTARY REFLEX.

THE FLESH TO
FLESH CONTACT
ROGUE CHOSE TO
AVOID IS MADE

MEMORIES THAT
ARE NOT HER OWN
RUSH FORWARD
TO ENGULF HER MIND.

WITHIN A MOMENT
SHE IS...
-- WILLINGLY --

--LOST--

PARIS...

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT, REMY...

"AND YOU CERTAINLY SHOULD HAVE RETURNED!"

OH, CHERIE, YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT, SO QUICK TO USE YOUR TELEKINETIC POWERS!

STILL AS FIERY AS WHEN I LEFT...

"AND EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL."

DO NOT TRY YOUR CAJUN CHARM, MUTANT! IT DOES NOTHING FOR ME...

MAYBE NOT, BUT...

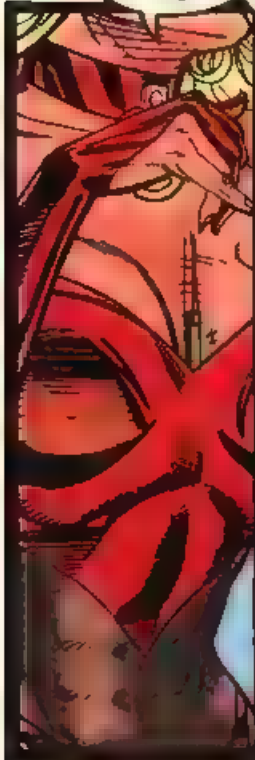
... Ah, BUT THERE WAS A TIME...

THAT TIME IS LONG PAST, THIEF! YOU NEVER WERE VERY GOOD AT COMMITMENTS, WERE YOU? NO LOYALTY TO ANYONE BUT YOURSELF.

I FINISHED MY WORK FOR YOU "CHERIE!"

AND NOW YOU'VE COME BACK TO PARIS... SEEKING TO BETRAY YOUR GUILD... FOR THIS!

THE ELIXIR! Candra, bye ~!

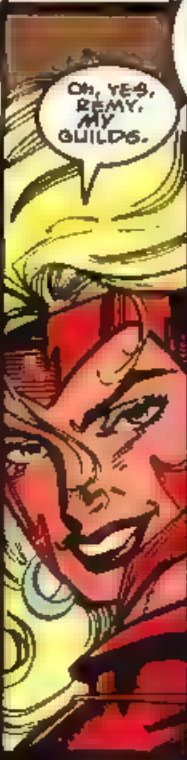


NOT
SO FAST, MY
HANDSOME
ONE.


PERHAPS
IN EXCHANGE
FOR SERVICES
RENDERED, AN
ARRANGE-
MENT COULD
BE MADE...

...ISN'T
THAT THE
WAY THE
THIEVES
GUILD
PREFERS
TO DO
BUSI-
NESS?


PLEASE
LET ME
TELL YOU
ABOUT MY
GUILDS.



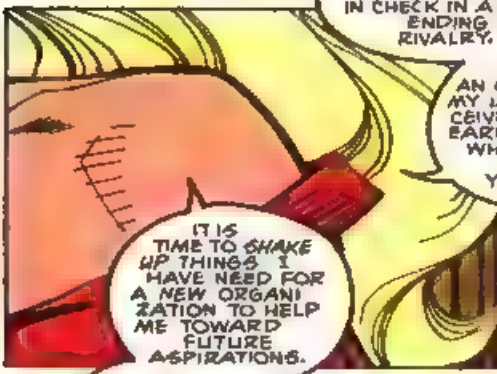
Oh, YES,
REMY,
MY
GUILDS.



I SET
THEM UP
CENTURIES
AGO I GAVE
THEM THE
ELIXIR
AND THE
POWERS



THIEVES
AND ASSAS-
SINS ALWAYS
AT MY
SERVICE...



...AS I REAPED
THE BENEFITS OF
BOTH, USING EACH
TO KEEP THE OTHER
IN CHECK IN A NEVER-
ENDING
RIVALRY.

BUT IT IS
AN OLD SYSTEM,
MY LOVE. ONE CON-
CEIVED IN AN
EARLIER ERA,
WHEN I WAS
MUCH
YOUNGER.

IT IS
TIME TO SHAKE
UP THINGS. I
HAVE NEED FOR
A NEW ORGANI-
ZATION TO HELP
ME TOWARD
FUTURE
ASPIRATIONS.

OUT
WITH THE OLD
AND IN WITH
THE NEW, I
ALWAYS
SAY.



CHERIE, WE'VE ALWAYS WORKED WELL IN THE PAST... BOTH IN BUSINESS AND PERSONALLY.

LET ME HAVE THE ELIXIR AND I'D BE MORE THAN OBLIGED TO HELP YOU WITH WHATEVER --

SERVICES RENDERED, REMY?

THERE WAS A TIME I HAD SUCH DREAMS FOR YOU AND ME. WE ARE SO ALIKE --

WE LOVED THE DANGER LIFE HAD TO OFFER.

BUT NOW YOU BOUNCE BETWEEN YOUR COMATOSE WIFE AND YOUR LITTLE X-GIRL LIKE A LOVE-SICK PUPPY.

STILL CAN'T WALK ON EITHER SIDE OF THE LINE, CAN YOU, BOY? YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO PLAY IT DOWN THE MIDDLE.

WELL, NOT WITH ME... NO LONGER. NOW YOU MUST CHOOSE.

KILL THIS MAN FOR ME, REMY, AND YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL... INCLUDING THE VIALS OF THE ELIXIR TO DO WITH AS YOU WISH.

FATHER?!
CANDRA, NO!
I'LL KILL YOU FIRST!
YOU --

KRAKOOOM

NEW ORLEANS.

ROGUE FEELS
ANOTHER'S
DREAMS...
ANOTHER'S
PAST.

THROUGH THE FLOOD OF
BELLA DONNA'S MEMORIES,
SHE EXPERIENCES THE
PRIVILEGED LIFE OF ONE
BORN AND RAISED TO THE
ASSASSIN BUILD ELITE.

MEMORIES
OF A YOUNG
GIRL IN LOVE.

"IN LOVE WITH
A YOUNG REMY
LEBEAU..."

"GAMBIT."

ROGUE GRASPS
AT THESE MEMORIES,
TRYING TO MAKE
THEM HER OWN.

HOW YOUNG AND TENDER
HE SEEMS AS HE HOLDS
THE WOMAN HE LOVES IN
A STRONG EMBRACE.

HIS GENTLE LAUGH
ECHOES ACROSS
HER MIND.

THE BURNING LOOK IN HIS EYES
JUST PRIOR TO THE TOUCHING
OF LIPS, LINGERS ON

THE SOFT CARESS
OF HIS FLESH
SETS HER OWN
AFIRE.

A LIFETIME
SHARED IN
THE BRIEFEST
OF SECONDS.

ANOTHER'S LIFETIME
OF MEMORIES.

MEMORIES ROGUE
IS LOATHE TO LET
PASS AWAY.

PAINFUL
MEMORIES
OF WHAT
ONCE WAS...

... AND WHICH
CAN NEVER
BE HERS.

GAMBIT...

Oh Lord...

WHAT
HAVE AN
ONE?

"WHAT IN
THE NAME
O' HEAVEN
HAVE AH
DONE?"

WHAT
A PRETTY
PICTURE
WE GOT
HERE,
HEH?

I SEE
GAMBIT
BEAT ME
TO YOU,
BUT...

"HE
WON'T BE
WINNING
THE
DAY!"

I WANT
WHAT IS MINE,
WITCH! YOU
GAVE ME A TASTE
OF THE ELIXIR
AN' BROUGHT ME
BACK FROM
THE BRINK O'
DEATH.

FOR DIS
I STIRRED UP ALL
KINDS OF TROUBLE
FOR YOU NOW YOU
BE HOLDIN' OUT
ON ME. GIVE ME
THE ELIXIR!

I THINK
NOT, JULIEN.
I OWE YOU
NOTHING.

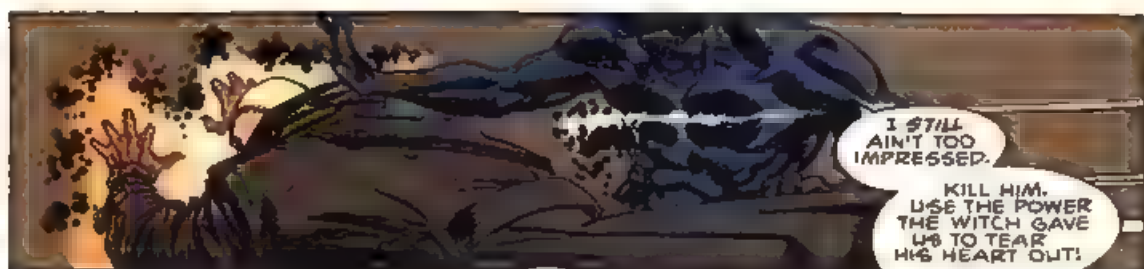
TITHE
COLLECTOR.
DESTROY
THIS
RABBLE!

YOU
LOOKIN'
TO MAKE ME
LAUGH,
CANDRA?

YOUR
WHIPPIN'
BOY COULDN'T
HOLD HIS OWN
AGAINST US
IN NEW ORLEANS.
WHAT MAKES
YOU THINK HE
CAN PROTECT
YOU NOW,
HEH?

UNDER
CANDRA'S
ORDERS I
ALLOWED YOU
TO WIN THAT
SMALL SKIRMISH
IN YOUR BACK-
WATER CITY,
ASSASSIN.
NOW,
MY
ORDERS
ARE QUITE
DIFFERENT.

WELL,
YOU
MIGHT BE
SEEN'...



I STILL
AIN'T TOO
IMPRESSED.

KILL HIM.
USE THE POWER
THE WITCH GAVE
US TO TEAR
HIS HEART OUT!

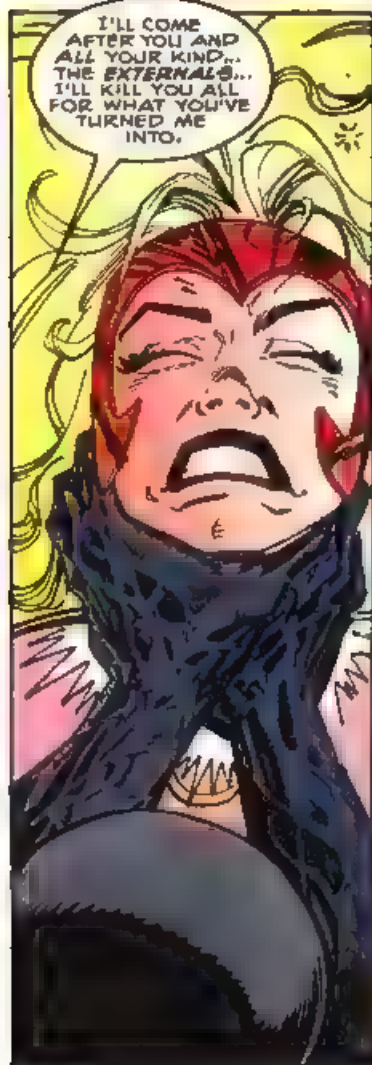


BUT YOU,
BENEFACTRESS..

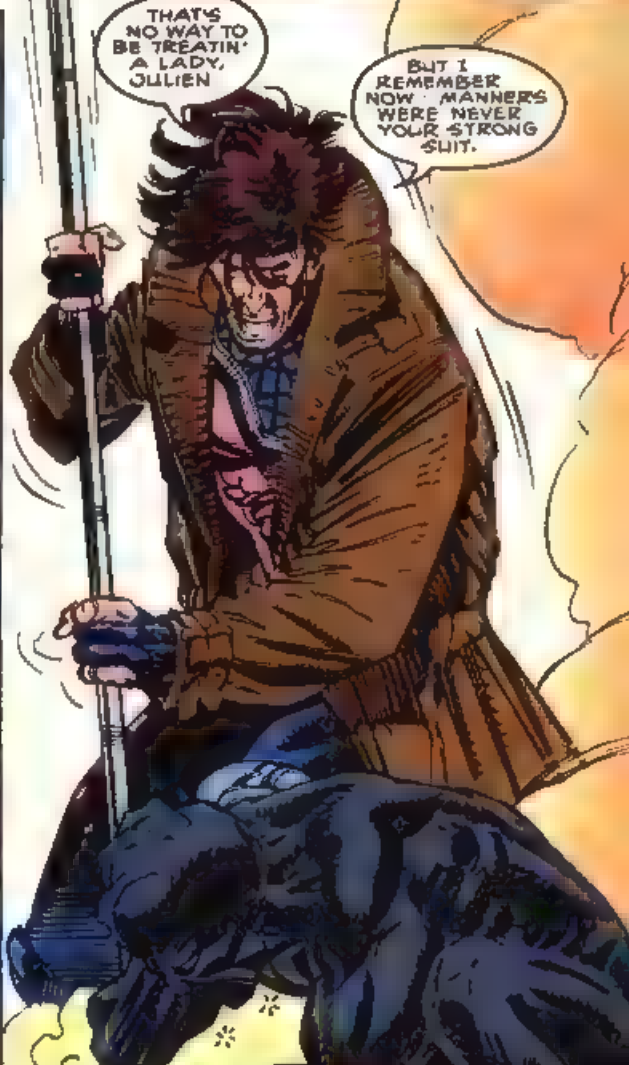
... YOU
ARE
MINE!

HARD TO
USE THEM
POWERS OF
YOUR'S WHEN
THE LIFE IS BEIN'
SQUEEZED OUT
OF YOU, AIN'T
IT?

YOU
NEVER SHOULD
BE MAKIN' PROMISES
TO ME THAT YOU HAD NO
INTENTION OF KEEPING.



I'LL COME
AFTER YOU AND
ALL YOUR KIND...
THE EXTERNALS...
I'LL KILL YOU ALL
FOR WHAT YOU'VE
TURNED ME
INTO.



THAT'S
NO WAY TO
BE TREATIN'
A LADY,
JULIEN

BUT I
REMEMBER
NOW - MANNERS
WERE NEVER
YOUR STRONG
SUIT.

IF YOU KNEW HOW SHE HAS USED OUR GUILDS, THIEF, YOU'D BE HELPIN' ME INSTEAD OF FIGHTIN'!

APPEARS TO ME, YOU STILL LETTIN' HER USE US, JULIEN!

YOU AND YOUR RENEGADES ARE STILL DOIN' HER DIRTY WORK.

LETTIN' HER USE US TO KILL EACH OTHER OFF NOW THAT SHE'S GOT NO MORE USE FOR OUR KIND.

STILL LIVIN' AS SLAVES.

MEANWHILE, SHE'S GOT SOMETHIN' I NEED TO BE TAKIN' BACK TO YOUR SISTER.

THEN THE USIN'S GOIN' TO BE FINISHED!

KRAK

THOK

YOU WON'T HAVE MY SISTER, REMY!

I'LL SAVE HER! I'LL PROTECT HER!

SHE'LL LOVE ME... HER BROTHER... ME! JUST LIKE IT SHOULD'VE BEEN, 'FORE SHE MET YOU!

YOU'RE SICK, JULIEN.

PERHAPS, BUT YOU, REMY.

YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE DEAD!

REMY! NO!

FATHER!



FATHER...

NICE
T'HEAR
YOU STILL
CALL ME
THAT,
SON.

DO WHAT
YOU MUST
DO TO SAVE
YOUR
WIFE...

I WILL,
FATHER.
BELLA
DONNA
AND YOU
WILL
BOTH
LIVE!

IT'S
OVER,
OULIEN!

YOU
GOT A HABIT
OF TAKIN'
AWAY TOO
MANY IMPOR-
TANT THINGS
FROM ME.

YOU
CHALLENGED
ME TO THE
DUEL THAT
BROKE THE
PEACE...

..AN' BECAUSE
O' THAT, I HAD TO
LEAVE NEW ORLEANS,
MY FAMILY.. BELLE!

I WON'T BE LETTIN'
YOU GET AWAY WITH THIS
STUFF NO MORE,
BOY!

YOU SAY
YOU WANT TO
HELP BELLE, BUT
ALL YOU'VE
EVER BEEN INTER-
ESTED IN...

IS
YOUR-
SELF!





BACK TO THE BE-GINNIN'...



...IT ALL COMES DOWN TO JUST YOU AN' ME, DON'T IT?

I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY, THIEF!



YOU WON'T BE WALKIN' OUT OF HERE, JULIEN.

NO. HE WON'T.



WHAT-?

A SILENT BOLT OF PSIONIC ENERGY SLAMS INTO JULIEN'S BODY.

HE CRASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW AND OUT INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE PERSIAN NIGHT.

SKRASH

THE BATTLE IS OVER.



NICE, CANDRA. BUT TELL ME, WOMAN -- WHY?

YOU COULD HAVE SAVED YOURSELF A LOT OF TROUBLE BY LETTIN' US KILL EACH OTHER.



WHAT? AND STAIN MY PERSIAN CARPET? NEVER!

BESIDES, I WOULDN'T HAVE YOU DYING WHILE I OWED YOU MY LIFE, REMY.



THEN, CHERIE.

...LET US SAY WE ARE EVEN?

STILL GOOD, NEH? I'D SAY THERE'S A SPARK LEFT BETWEEN US, SWEET.

GET OUT OF MY SIGHT, THIEF...

...BEFORE I COME TO MY SENSES AND HAVE YOU KILLED.

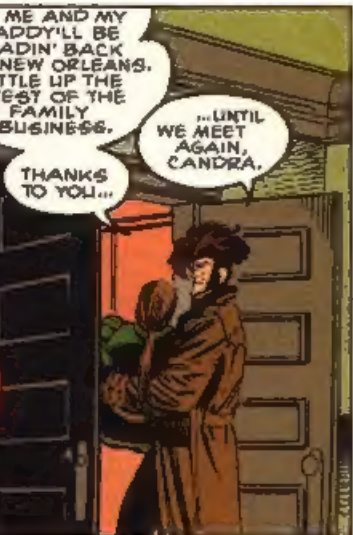
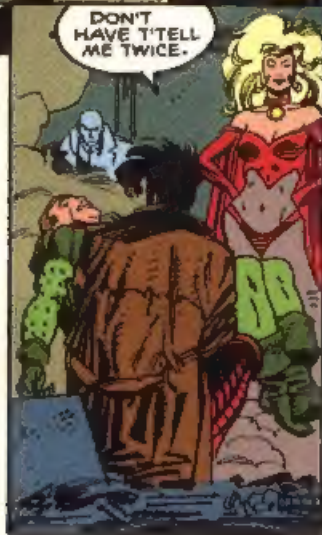


DON'T HAVE T'TELL ME TWICE.

ME AND MY DADDY'LL BE HEADIN' BACK TO NEW ORLEANS. SETTLE UP THE REST OF THE FAMILY BUSINESS.

THANKS TO YOU...

...UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN, CANDRA.





HAVE
THIS
PLACE
CLEANED
UP.

ALL IN
ALL, I'D SAY
THE EVENING
WAS A
SMASHING
SUCCESS.

THE
GUILDS
WILL BE
BROKEN.

JULIEN,
WHO I
BRIKESD—
BUT DID
NOT KILL—
WILL BE MY
WILD
CARD.

WE'LL
KEEP ME
AND MY
FELLOW
EXTERNALS
ON OUR
TOES.

OH, AN
END TO THE
BOREDOM
THAT COMES
WITH LONG
LIFE!

AND
NOW I CAN
BEGIN CON-
SOLIDATING
MY POWER
BASE
ANEW.



THERE ARE AL-
WAYS THOSE IN-
TERESTED IN
THE POWERS I
CAN GIVE
THEM...

IT'S GONE!
THE VIAL --
GONE!

HE STOLE
THE ELIXIR
STRAIGHT
FROM UNDER
MY NOSE!
AND I LET
MYSELF BE
CHARMED!

... AND
THE LONG
LIFE...?

TITHE
COLLECTOR,
FOLLOW THEM,
GO TO NEW
ORLEANS.

SPREAD
THE WORD
AMONG
BOTH GUILDS
THAT GAMBIT
HAS BETRAYED
THEM ALL.

I
WANT HIM,
HIS FAMILY,
HIS MUTANT
GIRLFRIEND,
HIS WIFE --
ALL DEAD!



To be
Continued...